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WYOMING GAME AND FISH

Cody Region Newsletter

July 2014

Medicine Lodge Wildlife habitat - Bill Robertson

Mountain Goat Trapping

In July attempts were made to trap mountain goats as part of the Greater Yellowstone Mountain Ungulate Project coordinated by Montana State University. These efforts were to increase the sample of radio-collared nannies in specific areas. Salt baits were placed to attract goats, then portable Clover traps (4'x4'x6' box-net traps) were horse-packed to the site and deployed to acclimate animals to their presence. A large group of primarily nannies and kids were coming to the salt bait site, but were not observed at the site once traps were deployed. It appeared goats were not avoiding the traps, as a couple individuals did enter them, but they may have moved to other areas during their normal seasonal movements, or forced off high elevation plateau areas by frequent thunderstorms in late July and early August. Not enough animals were frequenting the site to justify initiating trapping efforts (which involves a team of handlers and disease sampling specialists), and efforts were suspended for the year. Salt baits were removed prior to the August 15 archery season and efforts will resume next year. There are currently 15 radio-collared mountain goats and 33 radio-collared bighorn sheep in the Absaroka and Beartooth Mountains as part of this project.



Grizzly Bear Observation Flights



Snow conditions in the upper North Fork Shoshone during grizzly bear observation flights.

Biologist Doug McWhirter flew aerial observation surveys in Bear Management Units 6A, 6B, and 7A. No bears were seen in 6A (which is normal), while 21 bears were seen in 6B and 46 bears were seen in 7A. These represent some of the higher counts obtained in these two units. A total of 10 sets of cubs-of-the-year were also seen, which ranks as one of the higher counts as well. Most moth sites were free of snow and were occupied by bears, although some were still under snow. Skies were hazy, but did not affect visibility of bears.

Game and Fish participate in 4th of July parade



Right: Wildlife Supervisor Alan Osterland, Game Wardens Chris Queen and James Hobbs, and Large Carnivore Section personnel Luke Ellsbury, Dusty Lasseter and Kyle Bales on horseback.



Above: AIS Supervisor Greg Mayton pulling a boat while Fisheries Technician Chelsey Sherwood hands out candy. Right: Office Managers Karen Herburger and Michelle Parker pulling a bear trap.



Sprucing up Jack Creek cabin



A crew of Cody Region personnel spent a couple days at the Jack Creek Cabin constructing buck and rail fence, falling dead trees, staining the cabin and installing a carcass pole. Hard work and a good time were enjoyed by all.

Game wardens patrol Bighorn Basin waters

While checking fishermen on the North Fork, Game Warden Travis Crane walked toward two fishermen who were having a conversation; they did not notice him approaching. One of the fishermen had just caught a fish. He replied to his partner that the marijuana joint he had lit was helping his fishing success. After Crane observed the subject smoking a marijuana joint, Crane made contact with the fishermen who appeared surprised that he was there. BLM Law Enforcement Officer Ian Canaan was near the location and contacted the subject regarding his illegal drug use. The fisherman was a convicted felon and was in possession of several firearms and additional drugs. The subject was arrested.

Access Coordinator Dan Smith and Game Warden Bill Robertson contacted fisherman and boaters at Shell Reservoir and Adelaide Lake in the Bighorn Mountains over the July 4th weekend. The nice weather brought numerous people to the high country. Dan issued citations to one boater who had launched an unnumbered boat in Adelaide Lake. The boat had no life jackets and the only oar was a hockey stick. The operator also failed to purchase an AIS decal or get the boat, which was most recently registered in Colorado, inspected for AIS prior to launching.

Game Warden Bill Robertson contacted fishermen at a number of high mountain lakes. Fishing success is excellent as water conditions remain high but clear. No violations were observed.

Game Warden Craig Smith worked Buffalo Bill and area lakes and streams for fishing compliance. A handful of warnings were issued for fishing the closed area of the lake.

Public access

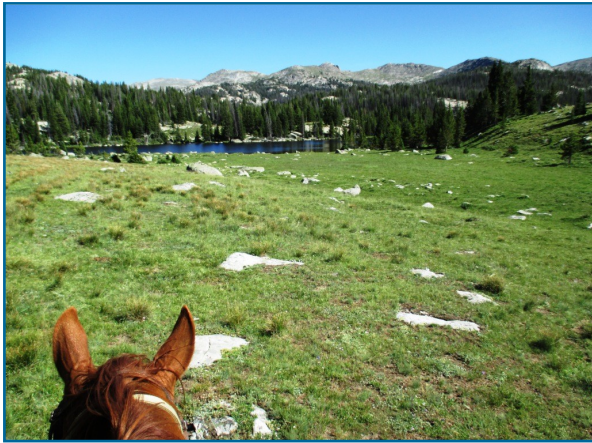
The Private Lands Public Wildlife (PLPW) webpage provides sportsmen with information on hunting Walk-in Areas, fishing Walk-in Areas, and Hunter Management Areas including location and all applicable rules. For access to Hunter Management Areas, hunters must first obtain a permission slip from the webpage. Some areas limit the number of hunters and permission slips are issued through a random draw. Throughout the month of July and most of August, hunters apply for these random draws. Stop by the office or give us a call if you need assistance applying for and obtaining permission slips for the various Hunter Management Areas around the state.



Wyoming Game & Fish Department's
ACCESSYES
Private Land/Public Wildlife Access Program

The Private Lands Public Wildlife Access Program is funded through Access Yes donations. Hunters are encouraged to donate to this program whenever they buy a license. These dollars are used only for access, so more money equates to more access.

Habitat



Worldland Biologist Bart Kroger reports habitat conditions in the interior southern Bighorn Basin are drying up quick. Most herbaceous vegetation is cured out. However, the foothill country and upper elevations remain fairly green and lush.

Game Warden Bill Robertson and Warden Coordinator Scott Werbelow visited a number of photo points on the Medicine Lodge Wildlife habitat unit and found forage conditions to be excellent.



Effects of 2013 Yellowtail wildfire



2013 (left) and 2014 (right) photos showing dramatic increase in white-top, a noxious weed.

Terrestrial Habitat Biologist Jerry Altermatt and Habitat and Access Specialists Craig Swanson and Eric Shorma revisited monitoring sites established by the Teton Fire Effects Crew after the 2013 Big Fork Fire on Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area. Photographs at permanently marked monitoring sites were retaken and compared to 2013 photos to document changes in vegetation two years after the fire. General observations are that all noxious weed species have increased and that many cottonwoods which appeared alive in 2013 are now dead. Herbicide treatments for noxious weeds will begin in August.

Forever Wild Families Sunlight Campout!



Families participating in the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Forever Wild Families program spent three days in Sunlight Basin, marking the end of their time in the hunter and angler recruitment program.

Families participated in a simulated big and small game hunt, fly fishing and a dutch oven cook-off!

If you would like to learn how to hunt and fish by participating in similar outings, contact Tara Teaschner at 307-527-7125 or Tara.Teaschner@wyo.gov.



High country lakes in Bighorns stocked with fish



In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, the Game and Fish conducted a helicopter fish stocking operation August 5 to stock fish in and around the Cloud Peak Wilderness of the Bighorn National Forest.

Within the wilderness, vehicle travel is both illegal and impractical for hauling fish to these remote waters. The helicopter offers a fast and low impact alternative for stocking fish.

Yellowstone cutthroat trout were stocked in East Marion Lake, Emerald Lake, Lake Elsie, Lost Lake, Lilly Lake, Lost Twin Lake's # 1 and # 2, Maybelle Lodge Lake, Poacher Lake and Little Poacher Lake. Golden trout were planted in Gunboat Lake, and Lower and Upper Pouch Lakes. Splake were planted in Lower Medicine Lodge Lake.

The length of fish will range from two and one-half to four inches. Fish being stocked will not be catchable size for at least two years.



Game birds

Worland Biologist Bart Kroger conducted several sage grouse and partridge brood surveys in the southern Bighorn Basin. He has observed a fair number of sage grouse chicks, with broods ranging in size from one to five chicks, but has yet to see a hun or chukar brood.



Photo by Stan Harter

Wyoming Game and Fish Department



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Find us on the Web: <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>